

November 17, 2011

South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs

425 East Capitol Avenue

Pierre, SD 57501

Phone: 605-773-3269

Web site: www.mva.sd.gov

DEPARTMENT BRIEFS ASA SPECIALISTS

South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs staffers Steve Oliva, Kevin Bowen and Larry Person participated in a *live meeting* training seminar with over 50 Adult Services and Aging Program Specialists Wednesday morning. Geography was not an issue, as *live meeting* afforded Department staff the opportunity to be in Pierre while the program specialists were located throughout various communities in South Dakota. Each participant needed only a computer and a telephone to participate in this training session.

The Division of Adult Services and Aging provides home and community service options to individuals 60 years of age and older and 18 years of age and older with physical disabilities, regardless of income. Their focus is to enable South Dakotans to live independent, meaningful and dignified lives while maintaining close family and community ties. They promote in-home and community based services

Department staff briefed participants on the benefits and services available to veterans and their dependents, as well as provided them with resources to assist them in getting veterans in contact with Veterans Service Officers.

Utilizing this technology was a great opportunity to expand our training delivery. The Department believes this will be a mechanism to brief leaders within the veteran network on benefit changes and updates.



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VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK

On Thursday, November 10, veterans, tribal leaders, community leaders and elected officials gathered in Eagle Butte for the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Cheyenne River Veteran's Memorial Park. Given the design and extensive nature of the Park it is scheduled to be completed in 2020.

Field Officer Paul Gremse attended the dedication on behalf of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. J.R. LaPlante, Secretary of South Dakota Department of Tribal Relations, participated in the ceremony as well.



STAND DOWNS

Over 97 veterans attended the McLaughlin Stand Down November 9. Loyson Carda, Corson and Perkins County Veterans Service Officer and Ralph Sowder, State Veterans Home Technician, were on hand with South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Field Officer Paul Gremse to assist veterans regarding benefits and services.

Gremse and Dewey County Veterans Service Officer Tom McClelland assisted veterans at the Eagle Butte Stand Down on November 10.



MAKE THE CONNECTION

Make the Connection, a new campaign launched by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, is creating ways for veterans and their family members to connect with the experiences of other veterans—and ultimately to connect with information and resources to help them confront the challenges of transitioning from service, face health issues, or navigate the complexities of daily life as a civilian.

The campaign's central focus is a website, www.MakeTheConnection.net, featuring numerous veterans who have shared their experiences, challenges, and triumphs. It offers a place where veterans and their families can view the candid, personal testimonials of other veterans who have dealt with and are working through a variety of common life experiences, day-to-day symptoms, and mental health conditions. The web site also connects veterans and their family members with services and resources that may help them live more fulfilling lives.

At MakeTheConnection.net, veterans and their family members can explore information on mental health issues and treatment—and easily access support—in comfort and privacy, anywhere, anytime. Visitors to the web site can customize and filter their online experience, directly connecting with content that is the most relevant to their own lives and situations.

For more information, visit www.MakeTheConnection.net, or VA's mental health services website at www.mentalhealth.va.gov.

The screenshot displays the homepage of www.MakeTheConnection.net. The header features the site's logo, "MAKE THE CONNECTION", with the tagline "Shared experiences and support for Veterans". A navigation bar includes links: "Connect By", "Who You Are", "Life Events & Experiences", "Stories of Connection", "Signs & Symptoms", "Conditions", and "Resources & Support".

The main content area is divided into two sections. On the left, a "Welcome to MakeTheConnection.net" message states: "Connecting Veterans and their friends and family members with information, resources, and solutions to issues affecting their health, well-being, and everyday lives. Hear inspiring stories of strength. Learn what has worked for other Veterans. Discover positive steps you can take—all in the words of Veterans just like you." Below this is a link to "Learn more about MakeTheConnection.net".

On the right, a section titled "YOUR VETERAN CONNECTION STARTS HERE" provides instructions: "View content that is most relevant to you. Select any of the fields below to tailor your online experience, quickly connect to stories of people like you, and find information you can use. Your selections are completely anonymous and will not be stored." It includes a form with four numbered steps:

- 1 I am a: ☐ MALE ☐ FEMALE
- 2 I served during: [Dropdown menu]
- 3 I served in: [Dropdown menu]
- 4 I was exposed to combat: ☐ YES ☐ NO

 A "FILTER NOW" button is located at the bottom of this section.

Below the form, a "MY STORY, MY CONNECTION" section features three featured veterans: Bryan (U.S. Marine Corps), Krista (U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Army National Guard), and Jack (U.S. Marine Corps). Each has a small portrait and a brief description of their story.

The bottom of the page is organized into three columns:

- Information for You:** Includes a link to "Click a selection below to view information and real stories relevant to who you are and your experiences, and easily find resources for support." Below this are buttons for "Veterans", "Family & Friends", "National Guard & Reserve", "Active Duty", "Partners", and "Clinicians".
- Connect by Life Events:** Includes a link to "Explore life events or experiences that you can relate to and get information, stories, and resources for support." Below this are links for "Family and Relationships", "Transitioning from Service", "Death of Family or Friends", and "Jobs and Employment".
- Connect with Resources Now:** Includes a link to "Take steps to get your life on a better track through tools and information. Quickly connect with professionals and services near you that specialize in helping Veterans." Below this are links for "Resource Locator", "Take a Self-Assessment", and "Solutions for Self-Help".

At the bottom right, there is a "Veterans Crisis Line" logo with the number "1-800-273-8255 PRESS 4".

The footer contains links for "About Make The Connection", "About Your Privacy", and "Site Map". It also includes the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs logo and the text "U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs".

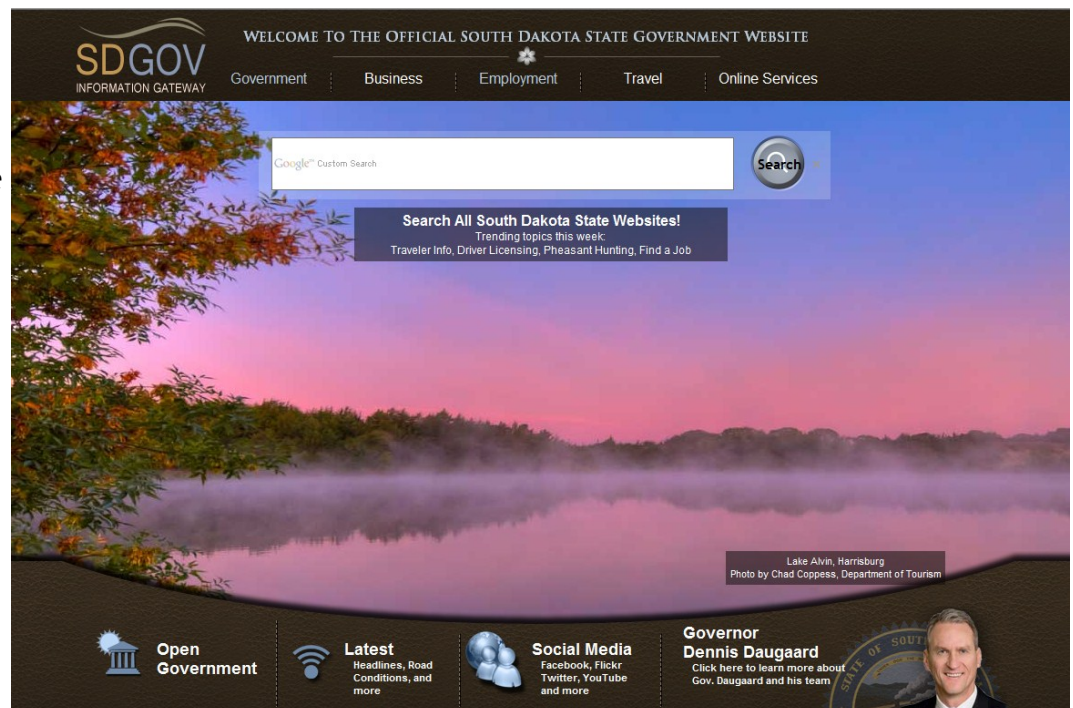
SOUTH DAKOTA UNVEILS NEW HOME PAGE

As part of Gov. Dennis Daugaard's *Better Government Initiative*, an improved South Dakota homepage has been launched.

The revised homepage provides user-focused content and efficiencies that allow people to more easily obtain state government information and conduct business with the state, Gov. Daugaard said. Key upgrades to the new www.sd.gov homepage include:

- ♦ Search engine functionality: The advanced search engine provides easy access to all state government information and services, allowing users to simply type in a keyword or phrase rather than clicking several times to locate a specific topic.
- ♦ Less clutter and more visual: Beyond the homepage, content exists with fewer distractions and more-detailed information. The new site is also more visually appealing with upgraded graphics featuring numerous picturesque South Dakota locations.
- ♦ Open Government: Direct access is available for government records and contract information through Open SD. Access is also available for open meetings.
- ♦ Online Services: Improved state government online operations allow users to more easily complete actual transactions, such as applying for hunting or fishing licenses, planning their South Dakota vacations, making child-support payments or renewing vehicle registrations. All of the online transactions represent significant efficiencies in state government; this section of the site will continue to grow.
- ♦ Social Media: Many government agencies are creating social media sites to interact and converse with online visitors. Facebook pages, Twitter accounts, YouTube channels and Flickr albums can all be found at the bottom of the South Dakota homepage. Social media outlets improve the availability, transparency and visibility of state government.

View the new State of South Dakota homepage at: <http://www.sd.gov/>. Follow Gov. Daugaard's progress on e-government opportunities at: <http://www.sd.gov/bettergovernment/>.



FINAL REGULATION PUBLISHED ON CLOTHING ALLOWANCE ELIGIBILITY

The VA has announced the publication of a final regulation in the *Federal Register* on clothing allowance that expands the eligibility criteria for Veterans with multiple prosthetic and orthopedic devices or skin conditions caused by prescribed medications.

A federal appeals court has ruled that veterans may be entitled to more than one clothing allowance, and the VA is adjusting their regulations to make sure veterans get the benefit of that decision.

The new regulation provides the criteria for more than one annual clothing allowance in situations where distinct garments are affected, and ensures veterans are adequately compensated for any damage to clothing. Veterans, who because of a service-connected disability, wear or use a prosthetic or orthopedic appliance that tends to wear out or tear clothing, are eligible for payment of an annual clothing allowance. Examples of appliances include an artificial limb, rigid extremity brace, rigid spinal or cervical brace, wheelchair, crutches or other devices prescribed for the Veteran's service-connected disability.

Veterans, who because of a service-connected skin condition use a medication that caused irreparable damage or stains to outer garments, are also eligible for payment of annual clothing allowance.

The change makes VA's clothing allowance regulations consistent with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit's holding in the case of *Sursely v. Peake*.

The application period for an annual clothing allowance is August 1 through July 31 of each calendar year. Payment of more than one clothing allowance to qualifying veterans will occur in calendar year 2012.

The VA is in the process of revising VA Form 10-8678, *Application For Annual Clothing Allowance*, to accommodate application for more than one annual clothing allowance. Currently, the single annual clothing allowance is \$716.

In the meantime, if a veteran wishes to claim more than one allowance, the veteran may continue to download and complete the current forms at <http://www.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/10-8678-fill%204-08.pdf> and <http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-4138-ARE.pdf>, to indicate that he or she desires consideration for more than one annual clothing allowance.

OMB Approved No. 2900-0198
Respondent Burden: 10 Minutes

Department of Veterans Affairs	
APPLICATION FOR ANNUAL CLOTHING ALLOWANCE (Under 38 U.S.C. 1162)	
PRIVACY ACT INFORMATION: No benefits may be granted unless this form is completed fully as required by law (38 C.F.R. 3.810). Responses you submit are considered confidential (38 U.S.C. 5701). They may be disclosed outside VA only if the disclosure is authorized under the Privacy Act, including the routine uses identified in the VA system of records, 24VA136 "Patient Medical Record - VA", published in the Federal Register. Information submitted is subject to verification through computer matching programs with other agencies.	
RESPONDENT BURDEN: VA may not conduct or sponsor, and the respondent is not required to respond to this collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB Control Number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 10 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. If you have comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, call 1-877-222-6337 for mailing information on where to send your comments.	
IMPORTANT: Please read the instructions below carefully, before completing the form.	
1. FIRST NAME, MIDDLE NAME, LAST NAME OF VETERAN	2. LAST FOUR DIGITS OF VETERAN'S SSN
3. ADDRESS OF VETERAN (No. and Street or Rural Route, City or P.O., State and Zip Code) (If new address check box <input type="checkbox"/>)	4. DISABILITY REQUIRING USE OF THE APPLIANCE OR MEDICATION
5. TYPE OF APPLIANCE OR NAME OF MEDICATION (Asthma reg. med. brace, wheelchair, etc.)	6. IS THIS DISABILITY SERVICE CONNECTED? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
7. NAME AND LOCATION OF VA MEDICAL CENTER OR OTHER INSTITUTION WHICH ISSUED APPLIANCE OR MEDICATION AND PHONE NUMBER IF IT IS NOT A VA FACILITY.	
8. MONTH AND YEAR VETERAN WAS ISSUED APPLIANCE/MEDICATION	
9. DO YOU HAVE A POWER OF ATTORNEY? (If "Yes", please identify name and/or Organization) <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
CERTIFICATION: I hereby apply for annual clothing allowance under 38 U.S.C. 1162. In doing so I certify that, because of my service-connected disability, I regularly wear or use the prosthetic or orthopedic appliance described above, which tends to wear out or tear my clothing or that, for my service-connected skin condition, I regularly use the medication described above, which causes irreparable damage to my outer clothing.	
10. SIGNATURE OF VETERAN	DATE
PENALTY - The law provides severe penalties which include fine or imprisonment, or both, for the willful submission of any statement or evidence of a material fact, knowing it to be false, or for the fraudulent acceptance of any payment to which you are not entitled.	
FOR VA USE ONLY	
11. CHECK OFF BOXES: <input type="checkbox"/> STATIC <input type="checkbox"/> NON-STATIC <input type="checkbox"/> NOT ENTITLED	12. EXAMINATION/EVALUATION DATE (if applicable)
13. PROCESSED BY:	DATE
14. AUTHORIZED/APPROVED BY:	DATE

SUPERSEDES VA FORM 21-8678, MAY 2003,
WHICH WILL NOT BE USED.

VA FORM 10-8678
APR 2008

WOW SHELTER DEDICATED

Women veterans, community leaders and political officials gathered in Belle Fourche last week as the new Women of War Project Center in Belle Fourche opened its doors Friday. Brigadier General Myrna Williamson gave the keynote address.

The shelter will offer food, counseling, education and employment assistance to up to 28 women veterans, and their children. Counselor

Chris Waldt, once a homeless veteran herself, says the women she hopes to help are in dire need of attention and help. "These women are coming off the streets with their children. And they not only need someone who has compassion, but someone who's been there," said Waldt. Most of the staff at the war project center are veterans themselves, Waldt says.

The shelter will house women veterans from 11 different states across the nation.

Field Officer Paul Gremse attended the dedication on behalf of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs.



UPCOMING EVENTS

November 18—SD Veterans Council Legislator Roundtable—Chamberlain

November 19—SD Veterans Council Legislator Roundtable—Piedmont

November 22— NVDA Hospice Training—VA, Fort Meade

November 24-25—State Offices Closed

December 2—SD Veterans Council Legislator Roundtable—Watertown

December 2— Memorial Service for Doug Brown—3:00 pm—Sioux Falls VAHCS

December 3—SD Veterans Council Legislator Roundtable—Sioux Falls

December 10—National Wreaths Across America Remembrance

December 26—State Offices Closed

January 2—State Offices Closed

Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer
South Dakota Department of the Military
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs
Soldiers and Sailors Building
425 E Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501
Phone: 605-773-8242
E-mail address: audry.ricketts@state.sd.us
Web site: <http://mva.sd.gov>

